



South Staffordshire Council

Talent Attraction and Retention Policy



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Key Principles

Background

South Staffordshire residents, businesses and visitors deserve the very best from their council and we need to ensure we are able to provide services that respond to their changing needs, as well as keeping up with the wider world, such as operating with reduced finance, changing legislation/government policy, the digital agenda, a challenging economy and cost of living crisis.

To meet these challenges, it is essential that the council is able to recruit and retain talented staff. The recruitment market is changing rapidly and becoming increasingly fast paced and competitive in the Local Government Sector

We recognise that it may be challenging to recruit new employees or retain existing staff in key hard to recruit or retain posts. This policy therefore provides a range of incentives, both financial and non-financial to attract and retain talent.

Scope

This policy applies to posts on NJC terms and conditions. Where stated, the policy may apply to post holders on JNC terms and conditions within the parameters of the council's pay policy statement and constitution.

Principles

Our principles ensure that:

- We have a fair, equitable, transparent and consistent policy for managers to use.
- Any payments above the post grade are objectively justified in line with the principles of equal pay.
- Payments are temporary and are subject to any review periods in this policy.
- Funding is within existing budgetary provision.

INTRODUCTION

Good recruitment is essential in providing excellent services and supporting our communities. Therefore, it is essential that we have a resilient and highly skilled workforce who demonstrate our values and have the attributes we need for both now and in the future.

It is important to consider a range of non-financial aspects as well as financial ones when considering recruitment and retention because although sometimes salary is a consideration, it's not the only factor. Recruitment and retention issues will not be solved by a one-size-fits all approach.

Development of new recruitment pipelines, internal succession planning, and an effective advertising strategy are all important. The council has a [Recruitment Resource Hub](#) to help managers rethink processes used in the past and consider some new tools and ideas to:

- Promote the council as an employer of choice.
- Support novel and new ways to advertise jobs and reach candidates.
- Provide flexibility and meet the diverse needs of services.
- Incorporate our Ways of Working values in recruitment and selection activities.
- Consider practical ways of engaging with hard to attract professions and local young people which are priority areas in the council's workforce development strategy.

This policy includes a range of recruitment and retention incentives. The intention is for recruiting managers to work in collaboration with their HR Business Partner in identifying and developing the options that best suit their service needs.

Some incentives have a cost attached. In the first instance services are expected to call on any existing budgetary provision in consultation with their Assistant Director.

However, where there is no funding provision, requests can be made as part of the business case approval process as set out within this policy.

Managers role

Managers responsibilities

- Review job roles for all vacancies using the resources and toolkits provided by the council to ensure novel and new ways to advertise jobs and reach candidates are considered.
- Design attractive high quality job adverts using our employer of choice branding.
- Develop well designed job roles whether they be work experience or paid roles that are interesting and varied.
- Actively support career fairs/events and consider work experience placements as an opportunity to promote careers at South Staffordshire Council.
- Consider redesigning jobs and converting the vacancy to provide an opportunity.
 - a. To recruit an apprentice, graduate or trainee role for a work experience student
 - b. For upskilling to facilitate diversity, succession planning and career development for existing staff.
 - c. To support programmes from our local education partners such as Sector Based Work Programmes, Industry placements to support T Level qualifications or short or long-term work experience opportunities.
- Consider and implement appropriate non-financial strategies to promote the attraction and retention of staff.
- Seek advice from HR if you believe grades need to be reviewed or a financial incentive may be required as you will need job evaluation advice and/or to obtain evidence for a business case.
- Obtain approval for any attraction and retention payments.

HR responsibilities

Provide

- Advice on this policy, advertising strategies, job redesign, pay and grading.
- Relevant market data where financial incentives are being considered.
- Marketing information for the council's career events.
- Advice on the employment of apprentices, graduates and work experience students.

WORK EXPERIENCE SCHEME FOR SCHOOLS

The South Staffordshire Student Pledge

Overview

A structured, well planned work experience placement is an effective way of influencing post school: education, career, and employment destinations.

Placements for school students are normally for one week during June and July. However managers can offer to take on a student placement for less than a week if this is more suitable for their service or offer alternative support such as acting as a mentor to a student.

- Placements are prioritised for students who live or study in the South Staffordshire District area.
- Students will be required to produce a brief CV and/or letter of application for the work experience role.
- Students receive an initial induction for their work experience week.
- Each student will have a workplace mentor for the week.
- Students will be provided with a daily allowance (up to £5.00 on production of a receipt) to contribute to travel and subsistence expenses.

Process/application

- Identify tasks for the students and notify HR of details of the placement
- Identify a supervisor for the duration of the placement (students must be supervised at all times).
- Identify ICT equipment.
- HR will match requests with placements.
- See also FAQ's regarding employment responsibilities when students are under 18 years of age.

INTERNSHIP/PAID WORK EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS/GRADUATES

Overview

This scheme is aimed at students who are studying at college or university and who are looking for a paid work experience placement.

This will normally take the form of an internship. An internship is a period of work experience lasting for a fixed period of time usually over the summer six-week break, but it can be offered at other times of the year and for a shorter or longer period.

Internships are typically undertaken by students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills.

The internship can be part or full time. It is recommended that the placement is for 20 hours a week for students under the age of 18 to enable them to balance compulsory education/training requirements that apply to 16–18-year-olds.

Salary will normally be based on the council's younger person rates.

The opportunity can be advertised in local schools, at our career events and on the council's website. Students living or studying in the South Staffordshire Council area should be given priority consideration. Individuals who undertake work experience with us can be given prior consideration of any external vacancies once they are suitably experienced/qualified.

Process/application

- Develop a job profile/project and advert.
- Identify a supervisor for the duration of the placement (students must be supervised at all times).
- Identify funding or request funding using the business case proforma in appendix A.
- Once approved, advertise the internship.
- Develop a service induction programme for the intern.
- Identify ICT equipment.
- See also FAQ's regarding employment responsibilities when students are under 18 years of age.

**HR will support managers in setting an appropriate payment for any paid work experience
Approval is required from the relevant Assistant Director.**

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T LEVELS

Overview

T Levels are a new qualification for students aged 16 to 19 in England who've finished GCSEs.

T Levels are vocational courses, and a high-quality technical alternative to A levels. One T Level is worth the same UCAS points as three A Levels.

They are two-year programmes with 80% of that time spent in the classroom, and 20% on a minimum nine-week industry placement with an employer. Placements will last at least 315 hours (approx 45 days).

At the time of writing there are 20 T Levels already available to study. The most relevant ones that apply to Local Government include legal, accountancy, finance, digital and management and administration. The industry placements element gives students an opportunity to develop their practical and technical skills in a role directly relevant to their vocational course. This link provides further information about how [industry placements work](#) and this link sets out the [responsibilities as an employer](#) that managers need to consider.

There is no requirement to pay the student, however it is the policy of the council to contribute towards travel and subsistence expenses. (Up to £5 a day on production of a receipt).

The opportunity can be advertised in local schools, at our career events and on the council's website. Students living or studying in the South Staffordshire Council area should be given priority consideration. Individuals who undertake work experience with us can be given prior consideration of any external vacancies once they are suitably experienced/qualified.

Process/application

- If you're interested in offering an industry placement, contact a school or college on this link [get in touch](#). Once you've found a school or college you'd like to work with, they will support you and your HR Business Partner throughout the process.
- Develop a placement role job description and advert.
- Identify a supervisor for the duration of the placement (students must be supervised at all times).
- Identify funding or request funding using the business case proforma in appendix A.
- Identify appropriate ICT equipment.
- Once approved, advertise the placement.
- Develop a service induction programme for the placement.
- See also FAQ's regarding employment responsibilities when students are under 18 years of age.

HR will support managers in making the arrangements for an industry placement. Approval is required from the relevant Assistant Director.

SECTOR BASED WORK PROGRAMMES (SWAPS)

Overview

South Staffordshire College operate a pre-employment training programme called SWAPS. This is a work programme for individuals (over the age of 19) receiving out of work benefits including Universal Credit. The programme can be part or full time and normally lasts up to 6 weeks and enables individuals to move into the workplace through training and a work experience placement which is linked to a job vacancy which can include apprenticeships or other vacancies. The scheme is ideal for vacancies where on the job training and experience is required. Benefits of a SWAP:

- Can recruit staff with the right training and skills developed through fully funded pre-employment training
- Opportunity to provide work experience placements for potential employees to ensure they are suited to the role
- If there is more than one candidate any remaining candidates can remain on a register until a suitable job vacancy becomes available.
- Opportunity for positive publicity to demonstrate the Council's commitment in removing employment barriers.
- Subject to eligibility we can signpost individuals for financial support and/or provide a payment to cover any related expenses (e.g., travel to work).

Process/application

- Recruiting managers should identify a vacancy and complete the normal approval paperwork stating the recruitment process will be through a SWAP.
- Managers then need to contact South Staffordshire College to collaborate with them in designing a work experience programme for the role.
- HR and the College will support managers regarding advertising and implementing the working experience offer.
- Approval is required from the relevant Assistant Director.

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APPRENTICE SCHEME

Overview

Services are asked to positively consider converting vacancies into apprentice or graduate placements prior to any recruitment activity.

- Broadly speaking jobs graded C to D should normally be automatically considered for apprentice opportunities. However, hard to recruit professional posts can also be redesigned for graduates as trainee roles and the apprentice levy can be used to support them in working towards a relevant qualification.

Process/application

- A copy of our Apprentice and Graduate Policy can be found here [Apprentice and Graduates Policy 2021.pdf](#) which provides further information.
- The approval will be in line with existing recruitment approval provisions.

Further information from Jo Evans in Human Resources.



REFER A FRIEND SCHEME

Overview

Refer a friend scheme is a reward for employees who recommend us as an employer.

- If a postholder is appointed to a position at South Staffordshire Council because of a recommendation from one of our employees, the referring employee will receive a cash or voucher benefit that has a net value of £50.00 as a thank you.
- Casual work and contracts for less than 3 months are excluded from the scheme unless otherwise stated/advised.
- Referral of family members are excluded from the scheme.
- The reward can apply multiple times every time an individual post is filled.
- ELT are excluded from participating in the scheme.

Process/application

- To claim the reward employees should email Group HR with the name of the postholder who has been appointed and attach evidence of their recommendation e.g., copy of an email, WhatsApp or other social media message that is date stamped prior to the person applying for the vacancy. If there is more than one claim, the first claim received will be eligible for the reward.

REVIEWING GRADES/CAREER GRADE SCHEMES

Overview

If you have reason to believe that you cannot recruit on the existing grade, there should be a discussion with HR concerning the available options. In the first instance it is worth exploring:

- Job design - to establish if the job description duties are fully capturing the credit that the job can achieve under the council's job evaluation scheme.
- Reviewing any existing career grade roles/schemes and person specification requirements. Sometimes these can fall out of sync with the recruitment market and need to be reviewed.

If you have a hard to recruit vacancy you can also consider redesigning the job and accessing funding for training/qualifications. This could be an opportunity for career development for an existing employee or an opportunity to create an apprentice or graduate vacancy.

MARKET SUPPLEMENTS

Overview

Market supplements are a way of tackling recruitment issues by temporarily increasing the pay awarded to a post, without altering the job evaluation determined grade for that post and may be agreed when it can be shown that the salary range attached to the grade for 'hard to fill' posts is lower than the relevant labour market and this is having an impact on the ability to recruit staff and on service delivery.

This policy should be seen in the context of equal pay and should be read in conjunction with the council's Pay Policy Statement.

- Evidence of a poor response to adverts both in terms of quantity and quality of candidates.
- A post will need to be vacant or new
- A job will have had to be advertised on at least one previous occasion with an unsatisfactory response or
- There is robust market evidence to confirm that recruitment is likely to be unsuccessful, including:
 - Evidence from other similar employers being unable to recruit at a similar salary for a similar post or
 - Evidence of other market data confirms salary levels for the post are lower than the relevant labour market.
- Managers need to prepare a business case for CLT and work with HR to provide supporting market data to justify the payment.
- A full copy of the Market Supplement Policy can be found [here](#)

The payment should be included in the job advertisement and HR will ensure the appropriate provisions are included within the offer letter and written statement of particulars of employment.

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GOLDEN HELLO SCHEME

Overview

The Golden Hello scheme consists of a one-off conditional payment made to individuals appointed to defined posts in exceptionally competitive skill shortage areas. The purpose of the scheme is to attract suitable candidates to posts where recruitment is difficult and highly competitive.

- Payments are subject to PAYE and pay awards do not apply to Golden Hello payments.
- The scheme only applies to external candidates applying for a position and does not apply to existing employees.
- Payments will be made as an additional lump sum with the first monthly salary payment.
- If the individual does not successfully complete their probationary period, the payment is reclaimed in proportion to the period in post.
- If the employee leaves the post voluntarily or is dismissed for misconduct or poor performance within 2 years of appointment the payment will be reclaimed on a proportional basis i.e., if the employee had completed 12 of the 24 months 50% of the payment will be reclaimed.
- Health related and redundancy dismissals will not trigger repayments.
- A % payment of the annual salary applies as this will recognise part-time posts on an equal basis as full-time vacancies.
- In setting the amount the recruiting manager and HR need to consider relevant labour market evidence to support the payment of a golden hello.

Process/application

- The recruiting manager and HR identify relevant evidence from the labour market and set an appropriate proposed % value.
- Approval for Golden Hello payments are required from CLT.
- The manager should complete the business case proforma in appendix A in conjunction with their HR Business Partner.
- All business cases should be approved by Corporate Leadership Team. For JNC posts please refer to section 14 of the council's Pay Policy Statement
- The payment should be included in the job advertisement and HR will ensure the appropriate provisions are included within the offer letter and written statement of particulars of employment.

INTERNAL GRADUATE SCHEME HARD TO RECRUIT POSTS

Overview

Services develop a trainee role specification for an existing employee to gain a qualification and/or retrain in a different job area (hard to recruit) through the apprentice levy or where appropriate another course of study.

- The employee would need to be released from their substantive role on secondment to study one day a week and spend the remainder of their working time in the host service gaining practical work experience.
- HR will support managers in setting an appropriate grade for the seconded role which reflects job duties and educational/experience milestones where applicable.
- Secondment agreements would reflect the needs of the service releasing the secondee as well as the host service.
- Where the opportunity is a change of career that results in a reduced salary compared to the employee's substantive salary pay protection will apply (inclusive of the training period) in line with the council's job evaluation policy.
- The employee would be provided with prior consideration to external advertising when they are sufficiently experienced, and a vacancy becomes available.

Process/application

- Managers identify suitable hard to recruit vacancies and redesign with HR to reflect any essential eligibility criteria relating to the study route and that it is a trainee role.
- The approval will be in line with existing recruitment approval provisions.
- The receiving service will fund the salary which will be informed by job evaluation and be linked to educational and/or experience milestones. There will also be quarterly (or more frequent) reviews to monitor progress.
- The vacancy is promoted internally as a career development opportunity for an existing member of staff that wishes to retrain and undergo a career change.

ASPIRE, ANNUAL TALENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Overview

Supports employees develop knowledge, experience, and confidence to assist with career development and succession planning. To date a third of delegates have gained career or educational advancement. ASPIRE is updated every year to reflect the key developments affecting Local Government and South Staffordshire Council but in general terms covers.

- Psychometric profiles and workshops to help delegates develop a greater awareness of their personal characteristics and how they can use this knowledge to enhance relationship skills, communication skills, and influence.
- A personal mentor/coach to support them throughout the programme.
- Workshops packed full of learning, ideal for enhancing personal development, and to make the shift from operational to strategic thinking.
- Workshops that are specific to council priorities and decision making and developments in Local Government.
- The opportunity to work on a corporate project that is highly relevant to the Council Plan.

ASPIRE is published every year and is a great talent development option for services to tap into to support individuals that wish to develop their career.

Managers are asked to identify rising stars in their team and encourage them to apply to attend the programme.

What health and safety considerations are there concerning the employment of young people?

Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) <https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/employer/index.htm> covers employer responsibilities regarding work experience and employment for young people.

Of particular importance are risk assessments, induction, training and supervision.

Employers' liability insurance

Please notify finance of any new work experience placements so they can notify our insurers.

Safeguarding for under 18s

Training providers are responsible for safeguarding and the welfare of students. Please be aware they will check our policies and procedures to make sure the workplace is a safe environment for their student and may carry out a site visit before the placement. Please provide them with a copy of the council's health and safety policy (including where relevant risk assessments), our safeguarding policy and any induction and training information that they require.

DBS checks

Employers do not generally need to carry out a basic, standard or enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check on members of staff supervising young people aged 16 or 17. However, your training provider may ask a line manager or supervisor to undergo a DBS check if they feel this is necessary.

Induction

Summer work experience placements undergo a corporate induction delivered by HR.

For long-term placements please liaise with your HR Business Partner and jointly agree an induction programme. Using the council's standard new starter induction programme and package as a basis.

Data protection

It is important that both Data Protection and Confidentiality provisions and standards are clearly explained to any placements.

Appendix A

Talent attraction and retention policy

Business Case Proforma - Recruitment or retention incentive payment

1. Details of the Post

Job title

Service.....

No of posts

Grade range and current SCP/£.....

Additional allowances attached to the post.....

2. **What type of incentive payment are you seeking and what is the total amount for the post/ posts affected?** (If it is a retention payments – these only apply in the most exceptional circumstances at the discretion of Corporate Leadership Team. E.g. this is broader than hard to recruit and service delivery concerns. You would need to demonstrate that the post-holder is critical for the completion of a major project or task and not retaining the post would create a very significant risk for the council. If you are requesting funding for a paid intern/graduate/work experience placement please provide details of how this supports the councils employer of choice and workforce plans. *Note Q's 1,3 & 4 do not apply.*
3. **Evidence of recruitment/retention difficulties.** (Number of attempts to recruit, number and quality of applications received, exit interview information, recruitment evidence from similar authorities, professional bodies).
4. **Labour market evidence to support the business case.** (HR to complete)
5. **How will the payment be funded?** (NB before making a request for corporate funding any underspends within the relevant Assistant Directors services should be utilised in the first instance).
6. **Are there any equality and equity considerations.** (e.g. are there identical posts or circumstances that the payment should also be considered for)?

Date

Name of Requesting manager

Signature of Assistant Director